

Beach Road Proposal Aired

Duxbury

DUXBURY — The conservation commission will hold a continued hearing on the petition of Duxbury Beach Reservation Inc. to relocate a portion of the road down Duxbury Beach (between Poles 3 and 18) at 8 p.m. Dec. 6 in the town offices.

At a hearing held last week, the conservation commission said it needed further information from Duxbury Beach Reservation Inc. in order to put final conditions on the relocation of the road.

Dr. Lansing H. Bennett, conservation commission chairman, asked if relocating the road would aid dune restoration and if there would be destruction of grasses. He was told by beach trustees that the present road cuts through the crown of the beach and the proposed relocation area is the vegetation is weak and thin.

Major Purpose

Robert Miller, beach trustee, said the major purpose to relocate the road is to strengthen the road structure. The proposed new road would be at a higher elevation and further away from the beach and, according to the trustees, will enhance the beach for recreational purposes.

Summing up an article he read about dune restoration in a magazine, Dr. Bennett said perhaps stabilization of the dunes was not the "greatest idea in the world." He said, "The adjustments we do may not be in keeping with what nature has in mind."

Dr. Bennett asked if the loss of 12,000 to 14,000 square feet of grasses in the area would effect the food chain. Charles A. Krahmer, beach trustee, said it was a difficult question to answer, but that he didn't feel it will as it did not in 1971 when the road was relocated. Mr. Krahmer said basically they are trying to restore the beach to its natural state. He said the major problem is motor vehicles and wind erosion.

Narrower

John Aldrich, beach conservation officer, noted the proposed road is 18 feet wide and the road is presently 25 to 30 feet wide in some places, cutting through the dunes.

Mr. Krahmer said the cost of relocating the road and the maintenance of the road would be paid for by Duxbury Beach Reservation Inc.

Mr. Krahmer said the beach trustees have met with the Gurnet-Saquish Corp. and it concurs with the plan as it would very definitely be a dry road. He said they were attempting to make an adequate road for Gurnet-Saquish residents.

He described the start of the road as an S turn with a lot of sand to discourage those without proper vehicles going further down the beach.

Walter Read of Gurnet Road asked how many cubic yards of gravel are to be taken from the Bay. Mr. Krahmer said they would not be removing material and would be transferring stone from one portion of the beach to another.

Mrs. Constance Brown, conservation commission member, asked if the present road is now in what was the crest of the dunes, how did they intend to control cresting. Mr. Krahmer said they cannot really control cresting, but once the road is moved they plan to place snow fence next to it, which will act as a trap and accelerate building.

Mr. Krahmer said the best time to relocate the road is in the winter and if they get approval, they will start immediately. He estimated it would take three to four weeks to complete.

Against Vehicles

Mrs. Brown said she looked forward to removing motor vehicles from the beach entirely. She objected to motor vehicles on the beach and said access to the Gurnet and Saquish should be reasonable and limited. She also objected to the issuing of stickers to allow residents to drive down the beach. Mrs. Brown said, "I hope the trustees restore the dunes and plant grass, but restrict vehicle traffic." Mr. Krahmer said they have moved

the crossover and cars are not supposed to be on the outer beach.

Mr. Miller said they wanted to eliminate the manmade incision down the backbone of the beach. He felt the removal of rocks and sand to create a roadbed would have no adverse effect. Speaking on the question of the effect on the food chain, he said they would be involved with American beach grass rather than marsh grass and he saw no significant impact on shellfish or marine fisheries.

James Spinale, conservation commission member, asked if the present grass can be reused. Mr. Krahmer said this was impractical and they would buy new grass.

C. Martin Delano, conservation commission member, said there was a lack of information on the quantities of rocks and sand to be moved and asked what effect it would have.

Commission members pointed out the trustees were proposing a 7.5-foot elevation as opposed to a six-foot elevation now. Mr. Delano said 1,900 feet of road is a major project and he was against it as it now stands.

Mr. Spinale questioned if broadening the base of the dunes to allow dunes to grow higher is more ecologically sound than to leave the road cutting through the center of the dunes. He asked, "Is there any proof the width of the dune will govern the height?"

Dr. Bennett told commission members if they are going to let the trustees do this then they should let them do it right and build a substantial road.

Mrs. Brown suggested reducing the width of the road making it wide enough for one car with "turn outs." Other members disagreed and felt two cars should be able to pass each other.

Commission members agreed the S curve at the start should be maintained as a soft sand area. They agreed the road should be cabled on both sides in addition to snow fencing. The majority of the members agreed on an 18-foot wide road with snow fencing at the precise edge of the road. This was just discussion and no votes were taken on the conditions.

Conservation members will ask the trustees for a calculation of the "mining operation" and the extent of gravel they intend to remove and from where. The commission is scheduled to complete conditions on relocation of the road at the Dec. 6 meeting.